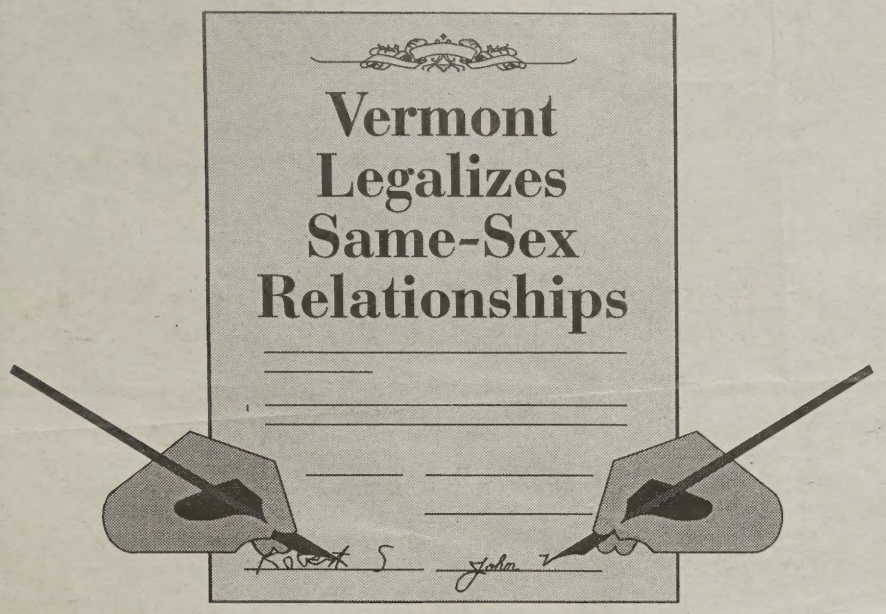
Gaymerica



It's not marriage, technically. The Vermont Supreme Court and state legislators weren't willing to go that far. It's a "civil union," a more neutral term, but it's basically the same. On Apr. 26, gov. Howard Dean signed the first-ever American law granting same-sex couples the same rights and privileges as married heterosexual couples.

"I think it is a courageous and powerful statement about who we are in the state of Vermont," said Dean. "I also believe that this legislation speaks to the heart of this state, and certainly to my heart."

"Vermont marriages" will confer about 300 rights and privileges on same-sex couples which had previously been exclusive to heterosexual couples. Included are the right to visit a lover in the hospital, the right to file joint tax returns and gain access to family health insurance policies, and inheritance rights. Unioned or "CU'd" couples would not have access to the more than one thousand federal rights and privileges currently enjoyed by heterosexual couples. Divorces—called "dissolutions"—would be handled by family courts.

Most portions of the law will take effect July 1. Provisions on taxes and insurance will take effect next year.

To get CU'd, both lovers have to be eighteen years of age and not closely related by blood. After obtaining a civil union license from a town clerk, they may get "certified" by a justice of the peace or any member of the clergy willing to perform such unions. Most American denominations forbid performance of same-sex marriage ceremonies. Three that allow them are the Metropolitan Community Church, Unitarian Universalists and the Reformed Jews.

While the law most directly affects men and women already living in Vermont, non-residents may travel there to get CU'd, making for a legal conundrum. While their relationships would be recognized in Vermont, they'd have no legal standing in their home states. The couple would have to fight in the courts for legal recognition, or work to convince legislators to change the law. Either way it's an expensive and lengthy proposition which some, however, are willing to risk.

"This is a breathtaking step forward in providing basic legal protections to same-sex families," said Mary Bonauto, an attorney for Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD), a legal organization that served as co-counsel in the lawsuit that led to the law. "It will make an enormous difference to real people and real families on a day-to-day basis."

Not to be outmaneuvered, the religious right is now attempting an end run around the new law. The American Center for Law and Justice, a legal group that's been wreaking havoc on court rulings and laws affecting the rights and privileges of gay and lesbian citizens, says it will be drafting a state constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriages. It hopes to eventually take its campaign to all fifty states.

"This kind of thing is clearly an effort by homosexuals to redefine the traditional family and it's got to stop," said Jay Sekulow, the group's lead attorney.

The same group has challenged Fairness ordinances in Louisville, Jefferson County, and Henderson and other gay-supportive laws nationwide.

Jean and Aleta, "The Fenceberries," pose for the editor at Dupont Circle in Washington Apr. 30. The Fenceberries are a major source for internet news for this paper and others nationwide.

Lesbians of Color Sought for Scholarships

The Audre Lorde Scholarship Awards are designed to recognize out lesbians of African descent who are making significant contributions to their communities. ZAMI wants to support and encourage their continuing education by providing scholarships to those women enrolled in accredited technical, undergraduate and graduate programs.

Any out lesbian of African descent who is a graduating high school senior or currently attending any technical, undergraduate or graduate school located in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas or Virginia is eligible. She must have a cumulative high school/college/or technical school grade point average of 2.5 or higher. She must also be accepted or registered at a post-secondary educational institution for full- or part-time attendance as defined by the institution. Lesbians forty years of age and over are strongly encouraged to apply.

Scholarship amount is $1,000, and there are ten to be awarded. Application deadline is July 15. Call 404/370-0920 or email zami@africana.com for further information and an application. Or write to ZAMI, PO Box 2502, Decatur, Georgia 30031.

Submissions by Lesbians of Color Sought

ISSUES Magazine—the magazine for lesbians of color—is the newest girl on the block. It's here, it's queer, and it's original with color, style and substance, and it's entered the millennium with a bang: the first issue has been a huge success!

"We all have ISSUES—matters relevant to our hearts, bodies, minds and souls," note the publishers. "We have issues that are specific to us as women of color and as women who love women. ISSUES is a magazine that reflects positive images of us as women of African, Asian, Pacific Islander, Latin, Indian, Central, South, and Native American descent." ISSUES satisfies its readers' need to see their own faces, hear their own thoughts, address their own concerns. It promises to address them all: the silly, the serious, the profane and the pristine with humor, intellect and sass! "Your issues are our issues; our issues are ISSUES; we strive to be a reflection of you," they write.

ISSUES is currently looking for the best and the brightest writers, artists and photographers who are talented, innovative, and unique. Veteran wordsmiths as well as the previously unpublished are equally welcome. The publishers appreciate all submissions but currently have specific needs for articles in the following categories: feature length articles (2-3,000 words), point-of-view (500-1,000 words); travel (500-1,000 words); fiction (2-3,000 words); and art submissions (send slides only for review, include SASE; digital files in JPG or TIF on Zip or regular floppy; do not send original art of any kind). Include a brief bio introducing yourself, and any additional ideas or suggestions you might have.

Send all submissions via email to issues-mag@aol.com or on disk to: ISSUES Publishing, PMB #435, 484 Lake Park Ave., Oakland, CA 94610; phone: 510/593-4453.

Oh, But the Shopping Was Too Fabulous!

Police are searching for at least twelve suspects who dressed in drag and stole purses and credit cards from several hospitals and nursing homes in the Ft. Lauderdale area earlier this spring. Thousands of dollars were spent on perfumes, makeup, high heal shoes, designer women's clothes, and at least six rental cars before police managed to bust one of the thieves. The rest remain on the loose.

"They're dressed as females," says Ft. Lauderdale police detective Russell Suess. "All they have to do is grab the purse, put it on their shoulder and walk away."

"People don't believe me when I tell them what happened," admits Denise Maillet, whose purse was stolen. "They keep saying, 'If I didn't know you so well, I'd think you were making the whole thing up.' But hey, I hope they at least got a nice pair of size 14 pumps out of it."

Lesbians of Size Conference July 14-16

[from NOLOSE]

The National Organization for Lesbians of Size (NOLOSE) will be hosting its second national conference for lesbians of size at the Ramada Inn in Kingston, NY July 14-16. The women-only conference is a festival for fat lesbians, their friends and allies, and is bisexual.

The keynote speaker will be performance artist and poet C.C. Carter. The event will also feature performances by C.C. Carter and musician Nedra Johnson.

There will be a variety of workshops including Fat Lesbian Sexuality, Butch/Femme and Growing Up Fat, as well as private pool parties, food, a Saturday night dance and the opportunity to purchase fat- and lesbian-related items from vendors and craftswomen. Grants of assistance, both full and partial, for women who need financial assistance to attend the conference are available.

For more information, please call 718/622-7631, email noloselass@excite.com, or write to NOLOSE, 245 Eighth Ave., #107, New York, NY 10011.

Regional News

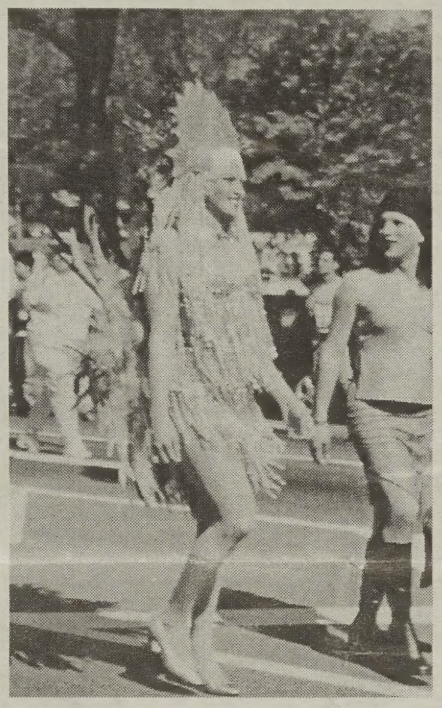
PrideFest Set for Indy June 10

Justice, Inc. continues to coordinate plans for PrideFest 2000, Indiana's largest gay/lesbian/bi/trans event of the year. The event will be held on Saturday, June 10, at Veterans Memorial Plaza in downtown Indianapolis from 11 am through 7 pm.

Last year 14,500 gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender and straight-supporting allies attended this event, making it the largest such event between Chicago and Atlanta. Justice is looking forward to an even larger crowd attending this year. The group urges you to mark your calendars and plan to attend!

Justice is currently looking for new entertainment acts to perform at this event. Volunteers are still needed to help coordinate vendors, to help coordinate public relations, to provide sign language services at the day's events, and to help out the day of the event or the night before.

For information about sponsorships and booth space, check out the Justice web site at www.justiceinc.org, or call the Justice hotline at 317/634-9212. If you can help with any of these efforts, call Justice President Wally Paynter at 317/634-9212 or email him at paynter@midwest.net.



Queens will rule in the Queen City in June.

CINCY PRIDE *(from p. 1)*

Sat., June 10

9 am - 1 pm, Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church. Pride Pancake Breakfast. Sponsored by Cincinnati Youth Group. 513/684-8405.

7 pm, Best Western Hotel. Be-All Transgender Conference Dinner and Big Band Dance. Sponsored by Crossport. 513/331-5339.

8:07 pm, Aronoff Center for the Arts. Cincinnati Men's Chorus Concert. "Among Friends." Call 513/542-2626 for tickets.

10 pm, The Serpent Bar. Mr. Serpent Bear Contest. Sponsored by River Bears of Cincinnati. 513/681-6969.

Sun., June 11

11 am on, starting at the gazebo in Burnet Woods. Pride Rally and Parade. Parade kicks off at noon. Sponsored by the Pride Parade 2000 Committee and the Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Cincinnati. 513/389-9182.

1-4 pm, Hoffner Park in Northside. Pride Community Picnic and Festival. Sponsored by the Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Cincinnati and Alternating Currents. 513/591-0200.

1 pm, The Serpent Bar. Pride Cookout. Sponsored by River Bears of Cincinnati. 513/681-6969.

2:07 pm, Aronoff Center for the Arts. Cincinnati Men's Chorus Concert. "Among Friends." Call 513/542-2626 for tickets.

2:30 pm, Jacob's on the Avenue. Drag Queen Mud Wrestling. Sponsored by the Pink Paradigm. 513/369-6738.

10 pm. Ohio Entertainer of the Year Pageant. 513/241-5623.

Mon., June 12

5 pm, The Dock. Stanley's Pride Cookout. 513/241-5623.

Tue., June 13

7:30 pm, Mt. Auburn Presbyterian Church. P-FLAG Scholarship Awards Night. 513/721-7900.

Wed., June 14

11:30 pm, The Dock. Pride Drag Revue with Ima's Divas. 513/241-5623.

Sat., June 17

All day. Womonfest 2000. A day-long outdoor event for women only. 606/442-5993.

Sun., June 18

7 pm, Grace Episcopal Church. Pride Interfaith Spiritual Service. Sponsored by New Spirit MCC. 513/681-9090.

Sat., June 24

6-10 pm, Celebrations Riverboats in Ludlow, KY. Pride Party Cruise 2000. Sponsored by the Gay & Lesbian Community Center of Cincinnati. $35. Reservations required. Call 513/591-0200 for tickets.

Justice, INC. Presents

Pride Fest 2000

TSA
Tri-State Alliance

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
JUNE 10
Veteran's Memorial Plaza
Downtown Indianapolis
11 am - 7:30 pm

This year's entertainment includes two stages featuring:
- Indianapolis Womens' Chorus
- Indianapolis Mens' Chorus
- Soni
- Theatre on the Square
- Vendors
- Female Illusionists
- Jay Quartet
- Phoenix Theatre
- Beau Brinkley
- Poetry Readings
- Beth Davis Band
- Drama Queen
- Geena and Mike
- Tranzmission
- Gay pride organizations
- Puddleglum
- ShawnShaw Redemption

Honorary Chairpersons are Mary Byrne & Charles Miller

Eagle Indianapolis · Professional Massage by Chad 317-372-9176 · Rainbow Alliance · PlanetOut · WET International · NUVO Newsweekly · 200 Degrees Evening · HERO Magazine · instinct Magazine · The Word · STATSCRIPT Pharmacy HIV/AIDS Specialists for Life · Classic Video

Aesop's Tables • After Dark of Fort Wayne • Cath Inc., 627 N. East St. • Chris Douglas, MetLife Financial Services, 317-567-2078 • Church of Good Shepherd in Exile in Mishawaka • Community AIDS Action Team of Fort Wayne • Michiana Rainbow Gazette • Pride At Work AFL-CIO • Up the Stairs Community Center of Fort Wayne Rainbow Reader of Fort Wayne • Up the Street of Fort Wayne • The Woodcutter Custom Furniture, 317-873-2803 • Sarj Guide • Out Word Bound Bookstore

Nashville Film Festival June 11

The Lesbian and Gay Coalition for Justice and the Nashville Independent Film Festival will be presenting a night of gay film and live acoustic music Sun., June 11 at the Cumberland Gallery, 4107 Hillsboro Circle. Reception and music begins at 4 pm, with the films starting at Regal Green Hills Cinema at 6. Tickets are just $25 and may be purchased at OutLoud or from any member of the LGCJ.

Cindy Bullens is the featured entertainer. Bullens, a two-time Grammy Award nominee, has a new album out, "Somewhere Between Heaven and Earth," that's proving to be a hit with critics nationwide. Food during the opening reception is provided by the Provence Cafe.

Feature film for the evening is "Sordid Lives." Delta Burke portrays an angry housewife with valium, vodka, and a gun, and she's not afraid to use any of them. Beau Bridges puts on a black lacy brassiere and wooden legs. Olivia Newton-John plays a sort of a 21st century Coal Miner's Daughter: that is, if the daughter was an ex-con and a lesbian. The film also features a transvestite obsessed with Tammy Wynette and a Baptist mother with major control issues (but then, what Baptist mother doesn't?)

Hang on tight for the film version of the critically acclaimed play "Sordid Lives"!

Prior to the feature film, audiences will be treated to two shorts: "Rick and Steve: The Happiest Gay Couple in All the World," an animated film that uses a cast and sets made totally from LEGO's; and "Night Deposit," a short film starring Christy Scott Cashman.

For further information via the Internet, contact the LGCJ co-presidents Bill Turner at drturner@mindspring.com, and Rhonda White at rhondawhite@juno.com

Night in White June 10

Nashville's splashy annual AIDS fundraiser, Night in White, is ready to go on Sat., Jun. 10, starting at 8:30 pm, at the Regal Maxwell House Hotel. Proceeds from the evening of food, libations, live entertainment, dancing, and a silent auction will go to benefit Nashville CARES.

Last year, Nashville CARES served over 1,300 men, women, and children living with and affected by HIV disease, helping them maintain stable and healthy lives for as long as possible. It also reached over 48,000 young people and other groups at risk for HIV infection through its AIDS education and prevention programs.

Tickets for the popular event can be purchased in advance for $30 by calling Joe Rively at 615/259-4866, ext. 500, or visit the event's web site at www.nightinwhite.org. Tickets will also be available at the door for $35. The hotel is located at 2025 Metro Center Blvd.